

THE HYBRID THREAT

Crime, Terrorism and Insurgency in Mexico

Proceedings of the Joint Policy and Research Forum



**A Joint CSL-HSPI Study
December 2011**



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Joint Policy and Research Forum co-convened by the
George Washington University Homeland Security
Policy Institute and the Center for Strategic Leadership,
U.S. Army War College, on October 20, 2011

A Joint CSL-HSPI Study

Washington D.C. and Carlisle Pennsylvania

December 2011



Founded in 2003, the George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) is a nonpartisan “think and do” tank whose mission is to build bridges between theory and practice to advance homeland security through an interdisciplinary approach. By convening domestic and international policymakers and practitioners at all levels of government, the private and non-profit sectors, and academia, HSPI creates innovative strategies and solutions to current and future threats to the nation.

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FOREWORD

Frank J. Cilluffo and Bert B. Tussing

THE HYBRID THREAT of crime, terrorism and insurgency is presently understudied as a matter of policy, strategy, and doctrine. As a small step towards remedying this conceptual deficit, and exploring those ideas in the particular context of Mexico, the George Washington University Homeland Security Policy Institute (HSPI) together with the U.S. Army War College's Center for Strategic Leadership co-convened a symposium in Washington D.C. on October 20, 2011.

What follows is a compilation of those proceedings. The forum began with keynote remarks offered by General Barry R. McCaffrey, former Commander of the United States Southern Command, and former Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. Following the transcript of General McCaffrey's presentation, we have inserted a policy paper designed to introduce the issues that resonated throughout the course of the forum. The remainder of the monograph gives full voice to those issues by way of transcripts of the event's two panel discussions. The first panel addressed strategy and doctrine, existing and yet required, that will be necessary to tackle our "hybrid threat." The second panel focuses on Mexico as a case study for those requirements.

We hope you will join us in reflecting upon how best to tackle these difficult conceptual issues that pose important national security implications. Much work remains to be done, however, to generate the theory and scholarship that could and should inform practice in this area.



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

MEXICO: DRUGS, CRIME AND THE RULE OF LAW

Barry R. McCaffrey, General, USA (Retired)

LET ME THANK YOU for the kind introduction. That was very generous. And more importantly, let me thank you for the opportunity to be here. I really came because I wanted to hear the two panels. You have brought together a number of people I have enormous respect for and who really understand the issues.

To set up remarks for the remainder of the session today, I must confess a bias. In my mind, the most important nations to the United States today – in terms of economic health, in terms of political realities, in terms of our future – are Canada and Mexico. With us, they constitute this giant economic basket. To a very large extent, we have enjoyed a tradition of open borders, allowing for the free movement of goods and services across a huge economic zone that was formalized by NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement]. I would also tell you that, when we examine our relationship with Canada and Mexico, we are taking into account 100 million-plus people who are central to our economic well being.

When you look at the United States, 307 million people who comprise the wealthiest society in the history of the world, and you look internally at how we keep this unprecedented prosperity going, a lot of it is based on immigration. Whether it is Nigerian petroleum engineers, Russian bridge engineers, or Polish aviation engineers, we reap the benefit of a huge amount of intellectual talent that comes by way of immigration into the United States. They arrive just like many of our forebears, with little else than hope and talent; and like those forebears, they have done, and will do, okay.

But the inescapable fact is that 10 to 12 million of those migrants (depending upon the numbers you want to believe) are here illegally. And the majority of those are Central American and Mexican laborers. They are growing our food, providing for the foundation of our construction industries, and running our daycare centers. Increasingly they are getting Green Cards,¹ gaining U.S. Citizenship and voting. They are buying businesses. That is all to their credit.

1. The “Green Card” is issued by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Its holder is someone who has been granted authorization to live and work in the United States on a permanent basis.

To our shame too many of these people are incapable of going to the police and asking for protection, not receiving minimum wage, not working under OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] safety standards, and unable to wire money home to their Mother (which is why they came here in the first place). All while carrying a significant portion of our economic vitality on their backs.

These things figure prominently when we start talking about counterterrorism or counterdrug activities or border control, because until you recognize that you have a million people a day crossing the border from Mexico – legally or illegally – we’re still talking about a half-million or more moving across the frontier. So, we have to regularize immigration, without which very little of the discussion that follows makes much sense.

In that discussion, I will tell you that I am an unabashed friend of Mexico. When you look inside Mexico, filled as it were with a hard working, humble, spiritual people – terrific businessmen, terrific friends – we find a culture that has permeated much of the United States. This is true in terms of food, music, and language; in fact, the only language (other than English) you can speak in the United States – freely anywhere in the country and be answered immediately – is Spanish. The interpenetration of our two cultures has been beneficial to both of our peoples.

Our response and interaction on a people-to-people basis is extremely positive. There is an enormous affinity shared between the Mexican and American people, both along the border and throughout the country. But on an official level, for hundreds of years there has been a tremendous anxiety – bordering on paranoia – on the part of Mexico. The classic saying, “Poor Mexico: So far from God...So close to the United States,” is indicative of this “official divide” that is not manifested in a “personal divide” between us. And I think a corresponding position on the part of official Mexico calls for a frank discussion of the political realities.

So the dialogue between the United States and Mexico, outside of the last ten years, has been based upon a combination of U.S. ignorance and arrogance, and Mexican paranoia; and that does not lead to sensible policy. And the problem is exacerbated by chasing policies that are based on what I consider to be a misnomer. What we are facing now in Mexico is not a “war on drugs.” It goes well beyond that. What’s happening in Mexico is a struggle to establish the rule of law; not just on a police and military level, but also on a cultural level. We are struggling with a contradiction: on the one hand, you are trying to create

a society that is internally democratic and self-governing; on the other hand, a significant element of that society has operated with impunity under the law. The short term problem – chief among the realities they're facing in Mexico – is that somewhere between \$19-\$35 billion dollars a year of drug-related commerce is being generated there. The numbers vary depending on your source, but the impact is clear. That amount of money is a blowtorch that melts democratic institutions. It establishes a level of violence – a sophistication of violence – that is perpetuated in and among 120,000 people directly involved with the drug cartels.

Some of them are organized in platoon and company-sized units – and I use those phrases provocatively to tell you that we are dealing with 50 to 70 people with automatic weapons, RPGs [Rocket Propelled Grenades], other military-grade grenades, machine guns, and 50 caliber anti-aircraft guns, who will engage in direct firefights and engagements with Mexican Marines and Soldiers. And they will abduct squad-sized units of the Army and the Federal Police, torture them to death, decapitate them, and leave them as provocative gestures. And they will abduct Mexican general officers, murder them, and leave them with a sign around their neck. They have created an internal atmosphere of intimidation that is so pronounced that, in some ways, it has become impossible for local police (and to some extent state police) to deal with it. It is some kind of threat.

How many people have died at the hands of these elements? Again, the numbers vary with the sources you choose; but one could safely posit 42,000 murders during the current struggle to establish the rule of law.

To reiterate, it's more than just drugs. It's also prostitution, abuse of women in the immigrant population, violation of commercial control laws, and potentially (although I don't think this is a dominant concern) it bears an associated threat with terrorism.

As Frank [Cilluffo] mentioned, we have just been through a Congressional hearing² surrounding a report I recently released with [Major General, Retired] Bob Scales.³ As the hearing progressed the focus shifted to the cartels' cross-border drug activity. There were a lot of sparks flying, with U.S. Congressmen

2. House of Representatives Homeland Security Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations and Management, "A Call to Action: Narco-Terrorism's Threat to the Southern U.S. Border," 14 October, 2011

3. "Texas Border Security: A Strategic Military Assessment," Barry R. McCaffrey, Robert H. Scales, September 2011, commissioned by the Texas Department of Agriculture

in denial over this situation; but basically, I think, there is an unwillingness to accept the fact that the problem is not just internal to Mexico.

You have to start with the fact that there are seven major cartels and forty or so subsidiary groups which, combined, represent a peril to the United States. Yes, Stupid, they do. There are 280-some odd cities in the United States whose dominant organized crime activity is Mexican cartel. They have associates in more than a thousand cities. I just did a seminar for the Portland (Oregon) Police. They are facing a Mexican cartel activity. I participated in the Alameda County “Urban Shield” exercise. Their county houses activity from another Mexican cartel. The cartel and their gang foot-soldiers are all over the country. They are armed, they are dangerous, and instinctively (because they are a business) they don’t want to confront the FBI.

You and I ought to thank God for the FBI, because the other threat to U.S. democracy associated with the ones we are dealing with here is corruption. You know, when you are talking about the amount of money being offered at this level, it’s not “silver or lead” being thrown up against a U.S. Border Patrol agent – it’s silver. And we’ve had some problems because of it.

Some of our institutions are almost impossible to penetrate: not totally impossible, of course; but when you consider the Coast Guard, the FBI, the Marshals Service, the U.S. Air Force (with regard to radar operators), it’s pretty hard to penetrate our institutions. That impenetrable nature keeps those institutions from crumbling.

But that cross-border threat from Mexico is real, and, as I said, is using gangs in America as its foot-soldiers. There are 30,000 gangs America, with a million gang members in them. In Texas alone there are 18,000 gang members. And unwittingly, we are contributing to their numbers. The United States has some 2.1 million people in our prisons – nearly the highest incarceration rate on the face of the earth. Within those prisons we are providing a means for these gangs to socialize, recruit and expand. When the incarcerated leave the prisons (and we turn out a half million every year) many of them are schooled and prepared to enter into the Mexican cartels’ activities. We have found that to be particularly true along the southwest border. And the ranks of the foot soldiers grow, with guns and power distributed from the rural communities of the southwest to the streets of our major metropolitan areas. And by the way, these are not hierarchical organizations. This is not an ideological struggle. This isn’t a religious struggle. It’s a criminal struggle. And that’s the threat we are facing.

Now we put something in the report that raised ire and anxiety in the law enforcement community. We said the conditions along the Texas border are like “working in a war zone.” That doesn’t mean El Paso; that island of tranquility that stands as the Geneva of the Southwest. The zone we are talking about is at “the end of the fence,” where people are crossing the border in gangs of 20 and 30 people with automatic weapons, cutting fences, intimidating ranchers, and abducting people. We had a wonderful Texas veterinarian rancher, Dr. Mike Vickers testifying at the hearing, who said, “well, you know, in my county alone there were maybe 600 homicides last year, primarily Mexican migrants crossing that frontier absent the protection of U.S. law.”

We have completely, inadequately resourced the control of our own frontiers with federal law enforcement. His isn’t a military operation. That “working in a war zone” comment didn’t come from me; it came from a Texas Ranger; and a similar comment came from one of the border communities’ Sheriffs. If you put together those border counties in Texas, and said “you are now a state,” it would be the poorest state in the union, bar none. And it would rank number one in federal crimes recorded. We’ve got a struggle going on in the frontier. And the frontiers are inadequately resourced.

We’re doing better. Thank God for Janet Napolitano, Judge Chertoff and Tom Ridge that have led the building of a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that is effectively the third largest department in the government. We have consolidated law enforcement organizations. We have put \$40 billion-plus a year into their works. So a lot of good has happened. When Mark Coomer⁴ – who intellectually propped me up through several assignments in life – and I were working on the Colombia issue, we had, I think, approximately 4000 people on the U.S. Border Patrol. That was it. And now we are up, I think, to 19,000.⁵ I tell people that the right answer is 45,000 people on the U.S. Border Patrol. The Attorney General, for budget reasons and programmatic issues, will ask: “Well, General, what are the analytical underpinnings to your argument calling for that number?” Underpinnings? I just made the number up out of whole cloth! 45,000 was the high water mark number of the NYPD and its civilian component.⁶ They’re protecting 8 million Americans. How would you expect to control 5000 miles of Canadian frontier, a couple of thousand miles

4. Mark C. Coomer, COL, USA(RET), currently the Director of Homeland Security and Defense Business Development, ITT Corporation

5. There are currently over 20,000 agents in the U.S. Border Patrol

6. The number of uniformed police officers in the NYPD peaked in October 2000 with 40,800 officers

of Mexican border, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and the Gulf Coast states with less than that number?

Nonsense! We have not yet created the institutions of domestic security that we need along the borders. And by the way, you can't just count on uniformed officers of the law. You have to include the justice system in the ultimate equation, along with detention capabilities and a host of other functions. If you end up with a Mexican family being used as surrogate mules for drug smuggling, you can't just turn them back to Mexico; you have to have some legal resolution that will incorporate all these functions and more. We haven't built that capacity yet.

Finally, what do you do about it all? If I was running for public office I would want to now proceed to tell you whatever you wanted to hear. But since this is such a complicated issue involving such a broad diversity of people, you can't offer a quick message with a single solution. I think that one of the things you have to do is to hit upon a decent strategy to approach the complexities. When we used to talk about complicated strategies of these sorts at the Kennedy School in Harvard, we sought after an architectural framework on which to hang our policies. The framework would necessarily include the resources that will be required to carry out the concepts you are trying to convey and apply, and the ends you are trying to achieve. I make no argument against Iraq, Afghanistan and other foreign [counter] terrorist operations we have undertaken; but right now the economic "burn rate" in Afghanistan is \$10 billion a month. We are running 300 to 1000 killed and wounded a month. And it's a pretty primitive and desperate struggle being executed 7000 miles away from home, with 150,000 NATO troops. Compare that to the expenditures being devoted to the requirements we are addressing here.

The Merida Initiative is the biggest slice of those expenditures to date.⁷ All told, it has cost \$1.3 billion over the last three years. We have given the Mexicans 11 helicopters so far. Are we kidding ourselves? Colombia has experienced a night-and-day change – primarily because of the courage of the Colombian people, the Colombian National Police, and the Colombian Armed Forces.

7. The Merida Initiative is described by the Department of State as the multi-year program demonstrating "the United States' commitment to work in partnership with governments in Mexico, the nations of Central America, the Dominican Republic and Haiti to confront criminal organizations whose illicit actions undermine public safety, erode the rule of law, and threaten the national security of the United States." To date, some \$465 million in equipment and training has been delivered under Merida. In 2011 roughly half a billion dollars in equipment and capacity-building programs will be delivered.

President Santos had me down there a year ago to witness the change. The last time I was there in public office in 2001 there were a couple of thousand people in my security detachment, because it would have been considered embarrassing to have had me “whacked” on my farewell visit. When I visited last year, there were a dozen of these professional security officers. You could drive all over the country. The ELN [National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional)], a goofy group of Marxists, is coming apart; they’re disappearing. The FARC [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia)] is overwhelmingly repudiated by the Colombian people. The Plan Colombia story is a good one, but a lot of the reason is that we stood with them, often to the tune of a billion dollars a year for several years. We gave, for instance, 250 aircraft and other means that allowed the Colombian national police to establish the rule of law across the one-third of the country where it had been lacking.

It is a success story. Earlier some of us were reminiscing over the work that we had done in support of the Plan. Once I was at a Congressional hearing, with 14 Representatives that spanned from the far-left to the far-right. All of them badgered me and whined and sniveled for the entire four-hour hearing; and then all of them voted for Plan Colombia. Afterwards we went with a bipartisan delegation down to Colombia, with the Republican Speaker of the House and the President of the United States on hand to sign that treaty.

There is a similarity here. And what I am suggesting is that, besides immigration reform, besides border control, I think what we need to do is to provide better support to the government of Mexico. There is no danger of a failed state there in spite of alarms to the contrary. You are not going to be able to take down the Mexican Marines and Army in a firefight with 70 narco-terrorists. That’s not going to happen.

But the question is, when the new Administration comes in – whether the PAN [National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional)], or the PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional)] – are they going to come to an accommodation with these criminals and dismiss our concerns as a “gringo problem, not our problem?” That would, of course, constitute a disaster for the rule of law in Mexico, but it would also be a huge problem for us. So we need, it seems to me, to demonstrably stand with these brave men and women in Mexico – to include the media, local police, local mayors, business leaders – all of whom now stand on the edge.

It is time for us to come out of the state of denial. Some of this is normal bureaucratic behavior. If you come in with a critical evaluation of any issue, the tendency of an administration – U.S., Mexican or what have you – is to roll up in a ball and deny the critique. In the hearing last week I called for a coherent strategy for border security. There is no unifying strategy for the border. We are better off with DHS, thank God; having an agency that is overseeing and coordinating the issues is essential. But you still run into these bizarre things; for instance, where the Border Patrol for the longest time was forbidden to set foot on Department of the Interior land. Now I think they have to “negotiate” their arrival to the same one to three days ahead of the requirement. What are we thinking? I recently heard that the Border Patrol responded directly to an unnamed television media inquiry having to do with the situation on the border, by saying: “I’m sorry we can’t take you out there....We’re not allowed to demonstrate that the 2011 Department of Justice threat report is valid.” We’re in denial, and we have to get over it.

We have got to decide what is important to America; and that, it seems to me, is to work coherently with both Canada and Mexico on a range of these inter-related issues. And I think we will.

So again, Frank, thanks to you and Bert for allowing me to make these opening comments, and I look forward to learning from the subsequent discussions.

HPSI ISSUE BRIEF

MEXICO AND THE TRIPLE THREAT

Sharon L. Cardash, Frank J. Cilluffo and Bert B. Tussing

TRYING TO DECIPHER the news coming out of Mexico these days is enough to give an observer whiplash. The signals are conflicting to say the least. On the one hand, there are horrific accounts of the most brutal violence, including beheadings and disembowelments. On the other hand, there are encouraging reports that the country is making economic and other headway, so much so that levels of illegal immigration to the United States are declining.¹ In point of fact, both depictions are true. But consolidating the latter gains, so they take further root and help improve the lot of an ever-wider circle of Mexico's people, will require stability. And that is an element in short supply today, thanks to the hybrid of crime, terrorist tactics, and insurgency, particularly in the five Mexican states where violence is the most highly concentrated.

Start with crime, meaning the "organized" variety that has significant impact on society at large. Think narco-trafficking, kidnapping, and extortion, to name a few. Drug trafficking in Mexico is big, if illicit, business. The most notorious players include the Sinaloa Cartel, the Gulf Cartel, Los Zetas, Juarez Cartel, and La Familia Michoacana. Profits are huge, and the enterprise is sprawling, reaching into the United States, Central America, and beyond. In recent testimony, the Assistant Administrator and Chief of Intelligence for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) estimated that \$322 billion is generated annually by the global trade.² Others adjudge that \$19 to \$29 billion in monies from the drug trade conducted by transnational criminal organizations flows into Mexico from the United States each year.³ The

1. Damien Cave, "Better Lives for Mexicans Cut Allure of Going North," *New York Times* (July 6, 2011) <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/07/06/world/americas/immigration.html>.

2. Testimony of Rodney G. Benson before the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Oversight, Investigations and Management Subcommittee, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives (October 4, 2011) <http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/Testimony%20Benson.pdf>.

3. Testimony of Dr. Gary M. Shiffman, Adjunct Professor, Center for Peace and Security Studies, Georgetown University, before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives (September 13, 2011) http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/shi_091311.pdf.

problem didn't originate in Mexico, but migrated there in force after Colombia cracked down on its own drug lords. As Mexican authorities attempt to put on the squeeze, the kingpins have sought sanctuary in Central America. Only a regional response will help prevent them from seeking and gaining footholds in nearby countries that are ill-equipped to deal with the challenge. America's partnership with Mexico under the rubric of the Merida Initiative (detailed below), and other U.S. partnerships with neighbors – such as the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative, and the Central American Regional Security Initiative – aim to contain the spread of the problem. But some have pointed out the limited capacity of partners in the region to absorb this U.S. assistance.⁴ In short; the illegal drug business continues to thrive amidst a global economic downturn.

In-country, the Mexican drug cartels have become so powerful that they threaten, if not effectively supplant, the state in certain parts of the country. Using merciless intimidation, the narco-traffickers have managed to subdue these local populations and secure their *de facto* allegiance. As one analyst describes, the Zetas, for instance, “seek to dominate the political life of a community, controlling the community's ability to organize and interact with the state, determining the extent and functions of local government, and sometimes even exercising quasi-control over the local territory.”⁵ Observers differ on how to characterize this situation. Some, including inside the U.S. Government (USG), have called it an insurgency or a narco-insurgency – although a few of these comments (including from USG sources) were later walked back.⁶ Mexican President Calderon himself has bluntly characterized the violent activities of the cartels as follows: “Their business is no longer just the traffic of drugs. Their business is to dominate everyone else... This criminal

4. See for example the testimony of Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown, Fellow, Brookings Institution, before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Peace Corps and Global Narcotics Affairs, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (March 31, 2011) http://www.brookings.edu/testimony/2011/0331_counternarcotics_felbabbrown.aspx.

5. Ibid

6. See for example Tom A. Peter, “Mexico denies Hillary Clinton's ‘insurgency’ comparison,” The Christian Science Monitor (September 9, 2010) <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/terrorism-security/2010/0909/Mexico-denies-Hillary-Clinton-s-insurgency-comparison>. See also Frank James, “Obama Rejects Hillary Clinton Mexico-Colombia Comparison,” NPR's News Blog (September 9, 2010) <http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2010/09/09/129760276/obama-rejects-hillary-clinton-mexico-colombia-comparison>. CNN Wire Staff, “Army undersecretary backs off comments about Mexico ‘insurgency’,” CNN.com (February 8, 2011) http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-08/us/us.mexico.military_1_drug-cartels-fight-drug-gangs-insurgency?s=PM:US.

behavior is what has changed and become a defiance to the state, an attempt to replace the state...⁷

Yet others reject the categorization altogether, saying there is no insurgency, in part because the cartels do not seek political control per se. Whatever one's view – ours, based on the available evidence, is that one would be hard-pressed to deny the existence of a narco-insurgency – there is clearly a serious problem when there are 15,000-plus drug-related homicides in a single year (2010), and almost 43,000 drug-related deaths in the past five years.⁸ And those simply in the business of reporting on these developments are at serious risk. Mexico has been described as one of the world's most dangerous places to be a journalist,⁹ and the mounting evidence in this regard is gruesome. Just weeks ago, for instance, the editor of a Nuevo Laredo newspaper was decapitated. The perpetrators left behind a note with her body, saying the slaying was linked to the editor's online postings about organized crime. Also last month in the same border city, two brutally desecrated bodies were found hanging from a bridge, along with signs intended to intimidate and warn people against using social media to condemn the drug cartels, as these victims had done.¹⁰

The bad news doesn't stop there. Just as the cartels and other criminals have adopted the grisly tactics, techniques, and procedures of terrorists, so too have terrorist groups undertaken a range of illicit activities, including smuggling and kidnapping, to fill their coffers and further their own ends. After all, at the end of the day, smuggling is smuggling is smuggling – whether it be drugs, people, or weapons, the routes are the same. Add to this mix technology, such as smart phones and social media, which have served to sharpen and expand the capabilities, capacities, and aspirations of criminals, terrorists, and insurgents. Differences in motivation between and among these actors (such as ideology versus desire for financial gain) may matter little, for practical purposes, where interests converge and intersect. Already we have seen at least one “controversial imam” smuggled across America's southwestern border by “a Tijuana-based

7. Tracy Wilkinson, “Calderon delivers blunt view of drug cartels' sway in Mexico,” Los Angeles Times (August 4, 2010) <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/aug/04/world/la-fg-mexico-calderon-20100805>.

8. DEA/Benson Testimony, *supra*.

9. “UN human rights office concerned about killing of journalists in Mexico,” UN News Service (September 30, 2011) <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=39896&Cr=drug+trafficking&Cr1=>.

10. Mariano Castillo, “Bodies hanging from bridge in Mexico are warning to social media users,” CNN (September 14, 2011) http://articles.cnn.com/2011-09-14/world/mexico.violence_1_zetas-cartel-social-media-users-nuevo-laredo?s=PM:WORLD.

smuggling group.”¹¹ U.S. security and intelligence officials are concerned that this type of activity could become more institutionalized and more worrisome, as major Mexican drug cartels “could form a profitable partnership with terrorists to smuggle weapons and equipment into the United States through existing drug routes.”¹² Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano has herself stated bluntly and openly: “we have, for some time, been thinking about what would happen if say al Qaeda were to unite with the Zetas...”¹³

Indeed, the type of scenario one would hope to see only in a Hollywood screenplay – complete with “conspiracy to murder a foreign official, conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction and conspiracy to commit an act of international terrorism” – appears to have materialized and was shared with the public by U.S. authorities just days ago. The indictment details and alleges “a \$1.5 million assassination plot...conceived...sponsored...and directed from Iran...” The target to be dispatched on U.S. soil was the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States, with that being just the first salvo in a series. The hired killers were to be Mexican drug cartel hitmen. In the end, the plot was thwarted by the efforts of, and solid cooperation between and among, the DEA, the FBI, and their Mexican counterparts. Nevertheless, the apparent evidence of would-be terrorists’ desire to cooperate with narco-criminals is disturbing – even though the outreach and transactions conducted by those charged in this case were (unwittingly) directed towards a DEA informant posing as a Zeta cartel member.¹⁴

How to fight back effectively against such a complex multidimensional threat? In kind is a good place to start, meaning with a multidimensional response that incorporates law enforcement, intelligence, and military components, as well as socio-economic and politico-institutional measures. Since taking office in December 2006, President Calderon and his government have attempted to do just that, by (among other things) deploying tens of thousands of troops to support law enforcement efforts, and pursuing vigorously government officials who have betrayed the public trust by accepting bribes from the cartels. The

11. Richard Marosi, “Controversial Muslim cleric is arrested while sneaking into the U.S.,” Los Angeles Times (January 27, 2011) <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jan/27/local/la-me-border-cleric-20110127>.

12. Jordy Yager, “Napolitano warns of threat from homegrown radicalization, terrorism,” The Hill (February 9, 2011) <http://thehill.com/homenews/house/143127-napolitano-warns-lawmakers-of-threat-from-homegrown-radicalization-domestic-terrorism?page=1#comments>.

13. Ibid.

14. United States of America v. Manssor Arbabsiar and Gholam Shakuri. http://www.cbsnews.com/htdocs/pdf/Amended_Complaint.pdf?tag=contentMain;contentBody.

scale of the problem is striking: even the Deputy Attorney General is alleged to have been on the cartels' payroll, collecting almost half a million dollars each month, intended for him to protect rather than prosecute the cartels.¹⁵

More encouragingly, the number of federal police officers has increased more than five-fold (to the current 35,000) over the course of President Calderon's tenure; and approximately one-fifth of the force is college-educated.¹⁶ Further, Mexico's high-value arrests and extraditions to the United States continue, as does a multi-year trend indicating both rising prices and decreasing purity of illegal drugs, including cocaine.¹⁷ But time will tell whether these positive trajectories and developments are lasting or fleeting, because the targets of these efforts seek to adapt to, and may ultimately evade, government action directed against them. Institutional advances are slower to take hold moreover, and until endemic corruption for example is rooted out of the political and legal/judicial spheres, including at the state and local levels where the problem is currently most acute, the foundation upon which Mexico is to build will remain porous and at risk. Strategy and doctrine (including their implementation and execution) to best tackle the triple threat is therefore still a work in progress in Mexico.

The same is true of strategy and doctrine on the U.S. side, where "spillover" effects are in evidence up to and including the northeast and northwest regions of the country, where Mexican drug trafficking organizations have established a presence. Note that the term spillover is used loosely here, as it suggests clear and unidirectional causality, rather than the complex inter-linkages that actually exist. It could be (and has been) argued for example, that U.S. demand for drugs and the flow of weapons across the U.S. southern border constitute substantial parts of the problem. Finger-pointing aside, the facts on the ground mandate a response. The question is what shape that will take. And the answer is complicated by the long and tangled history shared by the two countries – one legacy of which is a heightened sensitivity to, and appreciation of, matters of sovereignty, both actual and perceived. In consequence, measures applied in a different context may be nonstarters in this one, despite a positive track record in past. To wit, Plan Colombia, which incorporated a heavy dose of U.S.

15. DEA/Benson Testimony, *supra*.

16. Shannon K. O'Neil, "Evaluating Mexico's 'New Security Model'," Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) Blog (July 25, 2011) <http://blogs.cfr.org/oneil/2011/07/25/evaluating-mexico%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%99Cnew-security-model%E2%80%99D/>.

17. DEA/Benson Testimony, *supra*.

assistance to, and involvement in, a range of integrated initiatives, including counternarcotics and counterinsurgency.¹⁸

In present context, the United States introduced a bilateral program with Mexico in 2007, known as the Merida Initiative. As explained in recent testimony by the Department of State's Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Merida Initiative originally "aimed to utilize our foreign assistance mechanisms to provide specific equipment and training that the Government of Mexico identified. These resources requirements were designed to endow many of Mexico's federal authorities with specific tools necessary to confront cartels where they operate and to enable the provision of justice at the federal level."¹⁹ Over time the partnership has evolved, such that today the Merida Initiative is guided by "a four-pillar strategy that aims to: 1) disrupt the capacity of organized crime to operate; 2) institutionalize reforms to sustain the rule of law and respect for human rights; 3) create a 21st century border; and 4) build strong and resilient communities."²⁰ The shift in focus is thus towards multi-faceted engagement with Mexico, intended to help foster strong institutions and a vibrant civil society there. Notably, the vision underpinning the Initiative recognizes that the "border and the interior are inextricably linked," and so too are security and prosperity (in both countries) – hence the need for a "holistic" or "comprehensive" approach to border management and beyond.²¹

Moving forward, the Merida Initiative will continue to morph and mature. Its next phase will seek to support state-level law enforcement capacity in Mexico. Critics argue, however, that the Merida Initiative itself is flawed, plagued by delays and challenges in implementation, a relative absence of clearly defined goals and associated timelines, and insufficient integration into a broader

18. Department of State Fact Sheet Released by the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, "United States Support For Colombia," (March 28, 2000) http://www.state.gov/www/regions/wha/colombia/fs_000328_plancolombia.html.

19. Testimony of William R. Brownfield before the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Oversight, Investigations and Management Subcommittee, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives (October 4, 2011) <http://www.state.gov/p/inl/rls/rm/174982.htm>.

20 Ibid.

21. Testimony of Mariko Silver, Assistant Secretary of International Affairs (Acting), Department of Homeland Security, before the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Oversight, Investigations and Management Subcommittee, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives (October 4, 2011) <http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/Testimony%20Silver.pdf>.

whole-of- government, and western hemispheric, approach that recognizes and effectively responds to both the scale and complexity of existing circumstances and realities.²² Ironically, the present situation is to some extent a function of earlier successes generated by Merida measures and the Government of Mexico's own efforts. Together these helped winnow the size of the major cartels. But the unintended consequence was a splintering of these groups, so that now there are more than before. Although the principal players among them are each smaller, their ferocity is undiminished as regards their tactics, and more importantly, their drive to compete with and marginalize the state in so far as it is deemed to interfere with the cartels' profit-making. At the same time, these entities continue to think and operate transnationally, always on the lookout for workarounds and footholds in new locales as pressure is applied by U.S. and Mexican authorities, individually and in tandem. With this in mind, even the most powerful bilateral partnership would come up short. For this reason, a neighborhood-wide clampdown is needed. Increasingly involving others in the region, such as Colombia – including on a bilateral basis, between Mexico and third countries – would also inject a cultural and linguistic frame of reference, as well as meaningful and granular (historical and ongoing) experiences and lessons learned, that the United States simply cannot bring to the table.

Yet there is more that we (the United States) could do, including in terms of border security and enforcement. Whether it is drugs or weapons being trafficked, the illicit enterprise operates like a business, which presents opportunities and tools for U.S. and counterpart authorities to exploit for the purpose of counter-attack. The *White House Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*,²³ introduced in July 2011, implicitly accepts this conceptual framework. However, as one analyst observes, “we have only a limited idea of how the Mexican trafficking organizations operate in the United States....It is critical to develop a systematic mapping of transnational crime organizations in the United States that takes into particular account the way they move money southward. In contrast to terrorist financing, we have few sustained efforts to pursue drug trafficking in the same way.” Further, he argues, “we could do a far

22. See for example the opening and closing remarks by Representative (and Western Hemisphere Subcommittee Chairman) Connie Mack (R – FL) at the hearing of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, and the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, titled “Has Merida Evolved? Part One: The Evolution of Drug Cartels and the Threat to Mexico's Governance,” (September 13, 2011) http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/hearing_notice.asp?id=1348.

23. Subtitled, Addressing Converging Threats to National Security. http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/Strategy_to_Combat_Transnational_Organized_Crime_July_2011.pdf.

better job of intercepting illegal arms shipments headed south to Mexico. Even within existing law, we can do far more to develop an effective mapping of how the trafficking organizations purchase and move weapons across the border.” In both cases, the goal would be to develop the intelligence needed to better track and locate/seize the cash and the weapons before they reach border – at which point the task of catching either is exponentially more difficult, because concealment efforts are then at their peak.²⁴

In addition to this type of careful, patient work that supports operations, we must also do the hard strategic thinking to further develop a comprehensive (multi-dimensional, multi-instrument) plan to work with Mexico to help create and reinforce the institutional and social foundations and developments needed to achieve strategic success in the long run. This undertaking will be especially challenging at a time of domestic and international economic turbulence and restraint. Granted, policy without resources is rhetoric – but we must also try to work smarter and better.

Facts on the ground continue to mutate. Recent mass killings have led some, including local (Mexican) media, to speculate about “the emergence of paramilitary vengeance squads” in Mexico.²⁵ The so-called Zeta Killers group, for example, announced in July via YouTube video, that they would rid the Mexican state of Veracruz of Zeta criminals, which have long kept a fierce grip on the state and the country’s largest port (of the same name).²⁶ Mexican authorities assert, however, that the Zeta Killers group is simply “another organized crime gang that opposes the Zetas, with whom they are fighting for control of illicit income and criminal activities in Veracruz.”²⁷ Looking ahead, there will no doubt be other important developments that continue to change and unsettle the equation. The question remains, therefore, whether strategy

24. Testimony of Andrew Selee before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives (September 13, 2011) <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/sel091311.pdf>.

25. Associated Press, “Marines: ‘Zeta Killers’ gang responsible for 32 more killings in Southern Mexico,” *Washington Post* (October 7, 2011) http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/americas/marines-zeta-killers-gang-responsible-for-32-more-killings-in-southern-mexico/2011/10/07/gIQAyBhgSL_story.html.

26. Tim Johnson, “Paramilitaries may have entered Mexico’s drug wars,” *McClatchy Newspapers* (October 7, 2011) <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/10/07/126565/paramilitaries-may-have-entered.html>. See also George W. Grayson, Threat Posed by Mounting Vigilantism in Mexico (September 2011), U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1082>.

27. *Associated Press*, *supra* note 25.

and doctrine in Mexico, in the United States, and in the region can and will keep pace with the triple threat – mixing crime, terrorist tactics, an insurgency – that is at once adaptive, lethal, and determined. Until our thinking ripens across the board, so as to lay the groundwork for a posture that is powerfully suited to the prevailing threat climate, both the United States and Mexico will continue to play catch-up to the constellation of forces that presently bedevil innocent Mexican civilians most of all.



PANEL 1: STRATEGY AND DOCTRINE: TACKLING THE HYBRID THREAT OF CRIME, TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY

Introduction

Frank J. Cilluffo

WELCOME EVERYONE, to George Washington University this afternoon. We're in for a wonderful conversation – one that I'm not sure has received the attention that it deserves – certainly not from a national security standpoint.

Today's conversation will try to take a look at – both theoretically, strategically, from a doctrinal perspective, and then ultimately operationally, from a case study perspective – some of the challenges in Mexico, on the hybridization of the threat environment we're seeing, from counterinsurgency to counterterrorism, or at least terrorist tactics, to counternarcotics and transnational crime. The real question we hope to be able to grapple with at the end of the day is whether or not our strategies and doctrine are up to par, and whether or not we need, to some extent, to recalibrate or further align and integrate them with one another, to deal with what I think is a growing and significant national security threat.

At the time of the rollout of Plan Colombia, I remember all the pushback that the approach was getting at the time. Anyone who would have thought Colombia could have been the model for success then would have been pretty much thrown out of any room. Now look at it today.

I can't help but think that, coming at this from a counterterrorism perspective over the past few years, one of the greatest advances since 9/11 has been the synchronization of Title 10 and Title 50 authorities in the counterterrorism environment. Without getting into much detail, it's where the Department of Defense interacts with the broader intelligence community. I don't think some of the recent successes you've seen in this environment could have been possible immediately following 9/11 had there not been a lot of blood, sweat and tears, to get that done.

I don't think we're there yet vis-a-vis Title 10 and Title 32 issues; or with respect to the homeland and border security, Titles 19 and 21.

So the bottom line here is that we've got a great panel to shed some light on these issues. We'll be leading off with Dr. Max Manwaring, who is at the Army War College – another soldier-diplomat – a retired Army Colonel, who has written extensively on the convergence of crime, terrorism, and drugs. Then we'll hear from Mark Coomer, also a former Army officer, who has done some phenomenal work looking at counternarcotics issues at ONDCP [Office of National Drug Control Policy]. He will go into directly some of the lessons that can be drawn from Plan Colombia and beyond. And then last but certainly not least, we'll hear from Tony Placido who most recently joined Booz Allen Hamilton and came from the Drug Enforcement Administration where he oversaw intelligence for DEA. He has spent time overseas, in Bolivia and in Mexico, and was also Special Agent in Charge of DEA's Field Division in New York.

GANGS AND CARTELS IN COALITION AND CONFLICT: THE INSURGENCY PHENOMENON IN MEXICO

Dr. Max G. Manwaring

THERE ARE WELL OVER 100 small, irregular, asymmetric, and revolutionary wars ongoing around the world today.¹ In these conflicts, there is much to be learned by anyone who has the responsibility of dealing with, analyzing, or reporting on national security threats generated by state and non-state political actors who do not rely on highly structured organizations, large numbers of military forces, or costly weaponry (e.g. the transnational criminal organizations [TCOs; cartels] – politicized gang–criminal insurgent phenomenon; hereafter referred to as the TCO-gang phenomenon). In any event, and in any phase of a criminal or revolutionary process, violent non-state actors have played and continue to play substantial roles in helping their own organizations and/or political patrons coerce radical political change, and achieve putative power.²

Politicized gangs come in different types, with different motives, and with different modes of operations.³ I would contend, in fact, that these gangs have evolved across three generations of an instability continuum. The first generation was basically characterized by gangsterism and brigandage, and their focus centered on protection of markets and control in a competition of violence. The second generation continued in this disposition toward violence, but branched out from “local markets” to linkages with TCOs. In that partnership they turned their violence towards the incapacitation and/or corruption of police and other law enforcement and security organizations. The third generation of the continuum held to the character of the first two, but went on to involvement in and/or encouragement of ethnic feuds and riots, genocide, population dislocations, and terrorism. TCO linkages expanded from national to international; and the “gangs” became the de facto foot-soldiers of the TCOs, taking control of ungoverned territory or ensuring

1. As one example, John Sullivan cites data to the effect that ‘several hundred private armies operate in over 100 nations, on six continents, generating over \$100 billion in annual revenues.’ See Sullivan, John P., “Terrorism, Crime, and Private Armies.” *Low Intensity Conflict & Law Enforcement* (Winter 2002): 239–253.

2. Manwaring, Max G., *A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty*. Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2007.

3. Ibid

control (through corruption or coercion) of politicians and functionaries of the “established” government.

The motives and activities of these gangs are further complicated by their ever-shifting alliances with insurgents, TCOs, warlords, governments that want to maintain some level of plausible deniability regarding aggressive illicit action, and any other state or non-state actor that might require the services of a mercenary gang organization or surrogate to coerce radical change in policy and/or government.⁴ Accordingly, I would argue that the TCO-gang phenomenon can be as important as traditional hegemonic nation-states in determining political patterns and outcomes in national and global affairs. In Mexico, as in a number of other examples in South America, Central America and the Caribbean, it is possible to demonstrate how the weakening of national stability, security, and sovereignty can indirectly contribute to personal and collective insecurity, radical political change, and possible state failure. The emerging political objective, then, is to control governments and/or coerce radical change in discrete political-social-economic systems. This defines war as well as insurgency, and shifts the asymmetric global security challenge from abstract to real.⁵

I would contend, therefore, that non-traditional insurgency wars are being waged in Mexico today. In this type of war, the national security and sovereignty of the country is being impinged every day, and the TCO-gang phenomenon’s illicit commercial – that is to say, self-enrichment – and violent radical political motives are, in fact, an ominous political agenda. Lessons can be drawn to assist civilian-military leaders, opinion makers, and a concerned public in understanding the potential power and capability of the TCO-gang phenomenon to generate widespread political-economic-social disequilibrium. At the same time, these lessons may illustrate different ways and means criminal insurgents can achieve destabilizing objectives. Strategic leaders must think about and deal with the problems from multiple angles, multiple levels, and in varying degrees of complexity. The alternative is to watch our neighbor to the south become further engulfed in the chaos of violence that we see playing out in the news almost daily.

Authorities have no consistent or reliable data on the TCO-gang phenomenon in Mexico. Nevertheless, the phenomenon is acknowledged to be large and complex. Even a surface examination reveals the complexity. To begin, the gang

4. Ibid

5. Clausewitz, Carl von., *On War*. Trans. and ed. Peter Paret and Michael Howard. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976, p 75.

situation is markedly different in the north (along the U.S. border) than it is in the south (along the Guatemala–Belize borders). Second, the phenomenon is different in the areas *between* the northern and southern borders of Mexico. Third, we can see that there is a clear and formidable gang presence throughout the entire country (regardless of the accuracy of the data estimating the size and extent of this gang presence), and – given the weakness of the national political and police institutions – criminality has considerable opportunity to prosper.⁶ Frightening realities bear witness to this perverse prosperity: the rate of homicides along the northern and southern borders is considered epidemic (deemed ‘worse than Iraq’⁷), and Mexico has the highest incidence of kidnapping in the world.⁸ This violent confluence of TCO and criminal gang activity clearly threatens the national stability and sovereignty of the state, and the personal security of the citizenry throughout the country.⁹

The gangs operating on the northern border of Mexico are well established and ‘generational’ – that is, consisting of legacies handed down from fathers to sons and grandsons. Their organizations carry 40- to 50-year histories. And they are prolific. There are, reportedly, at least 24 different gangs operating in the city of Nuevo Laredo, and 320 active gangs operating within the city of Jua’rez – with an estimated 17,000 members. The best known gangs in the north are the Azteca, Mexicles, and Zeta organizations, whose members have been known to work as hired guns and drug runners for the major cartels operating in the area. The major cartels include ‘the big four’ – Jua’rez, Gulf, Sinaloa, and Tijuana – which operate generally in the north. But, perhaps foreshadowing a fourth generation in the gangs instability continuum, the Zetas appear to be in the process of becoming a cartel in their own right, and have launched an aggressive expansion strategy into areas as far away as Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.¹⁰

Despite the fact that most of the reported violence is concentrated in three northern states – Chihuahua, Sinaloa, and Baja California – the Jua’rez Cartel

6. Lee III, Rensselaer W., *The White Labyrinth*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1990; Manwaring, Max G., *Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency*. Carlisle Bks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, p.24; Stevenson, Mark, ‘Mexico: Drug Gangs Using Terror Tactics’, *Miami Herald* (17 May 2007): <http://www.midmiherfald.com/'915/story/110509.html>.; and *The Economist*, ‘Shooting the Messenger’ (10 October 2010), pp 44–45.

7. *Forbes*, ‘Mexican Meltdown.’ (22 December 2008) <http://www.forbes.com/forbes/2008/1222/073.html>

8. Ibid

9. Ibid

10. See <http://eluniversal.mx/notes/7219808.html> (dated 9 November 2010).

maintains a presence in 21 of the 30 Mexican states; the Gulf Cartel is found in 13 states; the Sinaloa Cartel has located itself in 17 states; and remnants of the reportedly disintegrating Tijuana Cartel (Arellano Fe'lix) are present in 15 states. There are also the Colima, Oaxaca, and Valencia cartels, which generally operate in the southern parts of Mexico. The Mexican Mafia (EME) further complicates the country's TCO-gang organizational picture.¹¹ At one time, all gangs operating south of Bakersfield, California, and into northern Mexico had to pay homage to and take orders from EME. That is no longer a rigid requirement. The Central American Maras, in fact, are known to have broken that agreement as early as 2005.¹²

More specifically, the Central American Mara Salvatrucha¹³ and Mara Salvatrucha 18 gangs (referred to collectively as the 'Maras') have made significant inroads into Mexican territory and appear to be working as mercenaries for and/or competing effectively with Mexican TCOs and gangs. In the south, along the Belize-Guatemala borders, the Maras have gained control of illegal immigrant and drug trafficking movement north through Mexico to the United States. Between the northern and southern borders, an ad hoc mix of up to 15,000 members of the various Mexican gangs and Central American Maras are reported to be operating in more than 20 of Mexico's 30 states. Additionally, members and former members of the elite Guatemalan Special Forces (Kaibiles) are being recruited as mercenaries by the Zetas, further substantiating its move into the TCO world as the former foot-soldiers recruit foot-soldiers of their own.¹³ But wherever the gangs stand in their evolutionary process, each appears to be fighting against the others, against the government, and against the citizenry to achieve their various commercial and political agendas.

Virtually all the gangs operating in Mexico have flourished under the protection and mercenary income provided by larger and older TCO (cartel) networks. The basis for those alliances is the illegal drug trade that is credited with the transshipment of 60-90% of the cocaine that enters the United States. In addition to trafficking in drugs, as noted above, gangs operating in Mexico are engaged in trafficking in human beings and weapons and are responsible

11. Ibid

12. Ibid

13. See statement of Chris Swecker, Assistant Director, Criminal Investigation Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, before U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary, November 17, 2005; *Economic News & Analysis on Mexico*, 'President Felipe Calderon Launches Ambitious Campaign against Drug Cartels' (24 January 2007) <http://www.allbusiness.com/north-america/mexico/3990914-1.html>.

for kidnappings, robberies, extortion, assassinations, and myriad other illicit, high profit-generating activities.¹⁴ On another political-psychological level of activity, gangs operating in Mexico are also engaged in intimidating and killing entertainers, journalists, teachers, bureaucrats, candidates for political office, office holders, and anyone else who may not be sympathetic to their causes, or who are deemed obstacles to the gangs' control.¹⁵

As a consequence, the TCO-gang phenomenon represents challenges to the authority and sovereignty of the Mexican government and those of its neighbors on three significant levels. First, murder, kidnapping, intimidation, corruption, and impunity give the cartels and gangs a de facto veto in the political process and undermine democracy. Second, by violently imposing their influence over bureaucrats and elected officials of the state, the TCO-gang phenomenon compromises the ability of the state to perform its legitimate national security and public service functions. Third, by neutralizing (making irrelevant) government and taking control of portions of a given national territory and performing some of the tasks of government (establishing a criminal version of law and order), the TCO gang phenomenon erodes state sovereignty (control of the national territory and the people in it) and replaces it with a criminal version of law and order. In this context, the cartels and their gang allies create quasi-states within a state, and criminal leaders control these areas as they wish.¹⁶ Lastly, these challenges combine to create a basis for state failure and/or a violent imposition of a radical political-economic-social restructuring of the state and its governance in accordance with the values – good, bad, or non-existent – of the victor.

14. Arana, Ana, "How the Street Gangs Took Central America." *Foreign Affairs* (May/June 2005), pp 98–110.; Grayson, George W., "Los Zetas: The Ruthless Army Spawned by a Mexican Drug Cartel." *Foreign Policy Association Headline Series*. Washington, DC: Winter 2009; Llorca, Juan Carlos and Frank Barak. "Mexican Drug Cartels Expand Abroad." *Associated Press*, 21 July 2009.; and Bussey, Jane, "Organized Crime Takes Control in Parts of Mexico." *McClatchy Washington Bureau* (14 September 2008) <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2008/09/14/52321/organized-crime-takes-control.html>.

15. Ibid

16. Sullivan, John P., "Maras Morphing: Revisiting Third Generation Gangs." *Global Crime* (August–November 2006), pp 493–4.; and Sullivan, John P., "Interaccion entre Policías y Militares en la Guerra." *Air and Space Power Journal* (3d Trimestre, 2009), pp 48–58.



DRUG TRAFFICKERS, INSURGENTS, AND SAFE HAVENS: LESSONS LEARNED FROM PLAN COLOMBIA

Mark Coomer

I'D LIKE TO BEGIN by thanking Frank and Bert for pulling together this timely conference. In the 12 years since Plan Colombia was proposed I don't think there has ever been an effort like this to extract lessons learned from our earlier experiences and see if they apply to Mexico. Thanks, too, for putting me on such a distinguished panel that includes my old colleague Tony Placido, and Dr. Max Manwaring.

I have been asked to discuss the lessons learned from our earlier counterdrug programs, especially Plan Colombia that might be applied to Mexico today. So let me give you the Reader's Digest version of Plan Colombia.

Without going into details, in Peru and Bolivia, between 1994 and 1999, successful drug control programs had decreased their total coca crop from 156,000 hectares to under 50,000 hectares. Although the counterdrug programs were unique to each country, they shared some aspects in common – under an improved security umbrella, the central government established drug control programs including alternative development, eradication, and interdiction in drug-producing regions. The center of gravity of these programs was the coca labor force, which was convinced or coerced to stop growing coca.

Colombia was a different story entirely. The coca crop was exploding in southern Colombia, expanding rapidly in growing regions under the control of the FARC. The FARC benefitted enormously from the cocaine economy – initially taxing the farmers and then moving vertically up the industry into cocaine production and trafficking. Estimates of FARC revenue vary widely from \$40 million to several hundreds of millions of dollars per year. Cocaine revenues bought the FARC arms, cadres, and power.

By 1999, by every measure Colombia was a country in deep trouble. The country was not secure – murder, kidnapping, and extortion rates were some of the highest in the world; travel and tourism were unsafe. Insecurity had pushed the Colombian economy into recession, unemployment was moving above 15%; brain drain and capital flight was robbing the country of a future. On the military side, whole battalions of the Colombian army were being decimated in open combat; the Colombian military was demoralized and, despite some

very talented leadership, headed in the wrong direction. Right wing illegal armed groups were committing massacres and assassinations with the same gusto as the FARC; and very powerful international trafficking organizations penetrated and corrupted government institutions and contributed to a climate of lawlessness.

So in 1999, General McCaffrey proposed in a discussion paper the essence of what would become Plan Colombia. He proposed a billion dollar emergency supplemental to support Colombian government efforts to push into the southern FARC coca-growing regions and establish sufficient security to stand up creditable counterdrug programs. Simultaneously the plan would pursue government reform efforts to reestablish the rule of law, improve the administration of justice, safeguard human rights, and restore economic vitality. The next year, Congress passed \$1.3 billion in funding to support these strategic goals in Colombia – Plan Colombia.

My Plan Colombia lessons learned fall into three categories: strategy, programs, and implementation.

Strategy

The first lesson in strategy is that it helps to have one. Without getting into a War College discussion of what strategy is and isn't, let me just stipulate that regional strategy should drive resources into programs, and provide a framework for campaign and operational planning. Not all strategies in Washington answer this definition. In my 14 years of service in Washington, I participated in the development of a whole passel of strategies. They come in all shapes and sizes. In some cases the audience is the aware public, and the intent is to explain government policy. In other cases the audience is the bureaucracy, and the intent is to explain new policy direction (but often without affecting agency budgets or programs). In fact, it is very difficult for the United States government to conduct interagency strategic planning that serves to both drive resources and operational planning. Plan Colombia was neither of those things. It really did drive planning and it really did drive resources.

For an example of how not to do strategic planning: In 1997, I wrote the first classified annex to the international drug control strategy. I thought it was brilliant. Barry McCaffrey said it was a "B-" at best. I have gotten "F's" from Barry before, so "B-" is not bad. After the first classified annex was published, almost nothing changed. Resources were not realigned to implement the strategy. At an interagency conference the following year we polled the

attending country teams from Latin America – they had never seen or even heard of the classified annex. The problem was that the policy process clearing the document only engaged the counterdrug policy offices of the bureaucracy. The people who would be called upon to implement the document were not involved. The Office of Management and Budget's budget and resource people who were to "resource" the document were not involved. So the document had no power in terms of ability to move resources, people, and things to accomplish new missions.

Programs

Plan Colombia was different for many reasons, and I would like to cite a few of them. First, there was an extremely skilled cadre of interagency planners who had been working together for years, headed by a core of retired and active duty Army colonels serving in the State Department under Rand Beers (at that time serving as the Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs). This planning cadre managed three separate but highly related processes: building bilateral alliances, fundraising, and campaign planning.

First is the process we used for forging the bilateral alliance. Most of this work is done at the diplomatic level, determining if our interests are sufficiently aligned to sustain a strategic relationship; and to assess whether our partner has the capability, political will, and legitimacy to accomplish a common strategic purpose. The framework for this diplomatic dialogue is the work done at the technical level by the combined planning staff to reach agreement on the basic outlines of the strategy. These discussions took place over many months in 1999.

Second is the funding process wherein programs are identified essential to support the strategic concept. The central planning staff has to assess requirements to accomplish the strategic objective, identify gaps in the host nation's capability, and identify U.S. programs that can address the gaps. That required a lot of knowledge on the part of the planning staff, and a lot of coordination in the interagency to get things done. This work began in 1999 and stretched over 2000, even as the bill was moving through Congress.

The universally critical basket of programs is intelligence and training. No matter what region the United States wants to address or what strategy it chooses, two critical components of U.S. assistance will be intelligence and training. I wish I had more time to discuss especially the intelligence aspects of assistance.

The third track of the planning process is campaign planning. This took in the detail of how the program would be stood up, sequenced, and integrated to accomplish our strategic purpose. Campaign planning is not our responsibility. It is the host nation's. But if campaign planning can take place as a combined activity, U.S. assistance can be much more efficiently targeted and delivered. For Plan Colombia, state led an interagency planning team to Bogota, and over a period of many months met with the Colombian interagency to develop the campaign plan.

"The plan is nothing, planning is everything." I think General Eisenhower said that. It was certainly true with Plan Colombia. The initial strategy did not survive contact with the Colombian interagency. The Pastrana administration was unwilling to push into the south. Although I was appalled at the time, in hindsight I have to say President Pastrana was right. It would take time for U.S. assistance to arrive and build capacity. In the meantime, the aftermath of the peace process continued to weaken the FARC politically and moved Colombian political consensus towards stronger programs. It wasn't until well into the Uribe Administration that the push into the south finally took place. Which brings up another learning point – treat your allies with respect: they know more than you do, and it is their country.

I should mention something about time horizons, which should be measured over a decade, at least. Assessments of Plan Colombia at the five year point were generally negative, or mixed at best. It takes time for aid programs to ramp up and be adjusted, capacity to be built, and strategic results to be realized. By nature these are long, protracted wars. But by the 10 year point – by almost every measure – Colombia had made tremendous progress. 54,000 guerillas and paramilitaries have demobilized, kidnappings have fallen 90%, homicides by 46%, and terrorist attacks by 71%. The economy is growing at a 5% annual rate and per capita GDP has doubled. Colombian cocaine production has fallen 57%. Beginning in 2007, the cocaine market in the United States was disrupted with prices rising 104%, while purity decreased 44%. Colombia still faces significant challenges, but major progress has been made across almost every measure I can think of, and U.S. assistance has been key.

Implementation

Now let me say a few a few words about implementation. Too often a bill passes, funding a new direction in U.S. policy, and implementation is turned over to a bureaucracy which moves as fast as molasses and can fight for weeks

about where to put a comma. It takes an extremely capable ambassador, with a country team on steroids, to implement a program as complex as Plan Colombia. To be successful, the ambassador needs a godfather in Washington to cut through the bureaucracy and usually a direct pipeline into the White House.

Plan Colombia would not have passed and been successfully implemented without the team of Barry McCaffrey and Tom Pickering acting as its godfathers, and Rand Beers doing the day-to-day blocking and tackling in Washington.

The planning structure that accomplished these three parallel tasks was completely ad hoc. Their success was not repeatable because no lessons were learned and the next similar exercise was led by a different office and different people.

We have attempted to institutionalize this planning capability for counterterrorism by creating a professional planning staff at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). I have been out of the government and am in no position to critique the NCTC's capability, but if I were I would have to say, sometimes, perhaps:

- Its authority is limited to counterterrorism
- Its lacks authority or process to drive budgets and programs
- It is too far away from the diplomatic level to provide a framework for combined planning
- It lacks a clear mandate to conduct regional campaign or operational planning, which needs to involve Combatant Commands, country teams, and the state regional desks
- Its planning processes mirror the military planning process. Interagency planning and military planning are not the same thing.

Perhaps, sometimes its work is like the 1998 classified annex, an "A+" document which does not cause much to happen.

The question is whether lessons learned from our earlier experiences translates to Mexico or other beleaguered states today. I will leave it to the next panel to talk about Mexico in depth, but I will say it seems to me there are more similarities between Colombia and Mexico than differences. In both nations capable governments have dedicated themselves to confronting what they see as a serious threat to their security. These threats have used the tremendous revenue from illicit activities to create violent institutions deeply rooted at

the local level. These organizations are self-sustaining and provide livelihoods, upward mobility, and status that are marvelous recruiting tools in the neighborhoods from which they draw support. Attacks on their leadership might disrupt and disorganize them, but law enforcement efforts alone are insufficient to root them out from the neighborhoods that sustain them. These international criminal organizations are busily engaged in rolling up or neutering government institutions in areas they seek to control. In these areas they have effectively created local enclaves where the illicit organizations are in fact the dominant political force – adjudicating disputes, conferring patronage, managing a pervasive intelligence apparatus, seeking public support, and even taxing the economic base through extortion.

On the other hand, the differences are not insignificant. In Mexico, criminal organizations practice politics and direct violence against the state, the press, and the people in pursuit of profits. They don't seek to replace the state. Their strategies do not seek alliances to create a broad-based national front that would greatly increase their power and pose an existential threat to the state. While they may not be an existential threat to the state, they do create an environment where life is nasty, brutish, and short. They won't go away, they can't be ignored, and confronting them effectively may require a different strategy mobilizing more resources against them.

In a handful of these strategies, there was commitment from the administration that the status quo was not acceptable and a willingness to commit resources. But in all of these cases but one, the interagency planning process was not able to articulate a strategy and link it to programs and resources. The resulting funding package resorted to the default position – a grab-bag shopping list of agency programs that were only weakly tied to strategic purpose.

Also, the strategic planning process should support the political process of building a political coalition to pass the legislation. Strategy requires very plain language to clearly link ends and means. The politics of coalition building requires fuzzy language to smooth over differences. As the funding legislation moves through Congress, changes will be made necessary to build a majority coalition. It's important that these changes are run through a strategy review to ensure that no damage is done to the basic strategy. The political critique of Plan Colombia was that the two-thirds/one-third split between hard side and soft side programs was unbalanced. In truth, the hard side programs were the bare minimum necessary to accomplish the strategy and could not be reduced without doing basic damage to the strategy; and the soft side programs, even

at the level they were funded, exceeded the capacity of the infrastructure to absorb them for some time.

A final word on implementation – metrics. Too often the bureaucracy seizes on metrics that measure output functions – hectares of coca sprayed, arrests, etc. – but not strategic success. I thought a key metric in Plan Colombia should be extraditions, which measured the relative power of trafficking organizations to safeguard themselves against the power of the government. When extraditions took off in 2002, I knew we had passed a milestone, and that the government was on its way to breaking the power of trafficking organizations. Since then, over 1,000 major traffickers have been extradited to the United States to face justice.

There are a number of other things I could lend to a comparative discussion over what happened in Colombia and what could and perhaps should occur in Mexico, but time limitations prevent going much beyond what I have discussed so far. I will, however, be happy to expand upon my points, and perhaps venture quickly into some other lessons learned, during our question and answer session.

Thank you.



PERSPECTIVE FROM THE GROUND: CRIMINAL THREAT, OR NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERN?

Anthony Placido

IN THE BRIEF TIME that I have, let me do three things. First, let me establish my bona fides. I have been asked to talk about the operational end of the subjects we have been discussing this afternoon. I will tell you that I have lived and worked in Peru, Bolivia and Mexico. I ended my career running the DEA's intelligence program where I helped to develop and implement the Merida strategy. So that's who I am; you take it from there as to what credence you attach to what I say.

What I would like to do next is to frame the issue for you. I have heard it said once – and I think most of you remember from the Judeo-Christian tradition – that the first controlled substance violation was in the Garden of Eden. And we've been at it ever since. But this problem, which General McCaffrey correctly framed, is really not about drug trafficking – with all due respect to our friends in the Drug Policy Alliance. It is a problem of the criminality surrounding drug trafficking; and that criminality has gotten so far out of control that a traditional criminal justice problem has morphed into a national security crisis. That crisis, in turn, is one that threatens democracy in the region, and has required the government of Mexico to mobilize military forces to combat it.

I agree that this has not evolved to anything resembling a failed state in Mexico; but it does constitute a regional conflict. Violence from Mexico is spilling over into Central America, specifically in Guatemala and Honduras. And you may be sure that it is spilling over to a degree into the United States, where there is a lot of fear about greater spillover. It is an engine of corruption, threats and intimidation; and borrowing from the old “Mr. Goodwrench” television advertisements, we have reached a point where you “can pay me now, or pay me later.” This is not a problem that will go away. We can ignore it at our own peril.

Now along those lines, the next thing I really wanted to talk about today is the confluence of crime, terrorism, and insurgency. We have Juan Zarate (who will be on the next panel), Greg Gatjanis from the National Security Council and others, all of whom would tell you that these terms in a political context have very specific meanings. These are distinctions that make very important

differences. We don't want to fall into the trap of using these words loosely. I will be the first to admit to you – from an operator's perspective and someone who has been down there during the Fox Administration¹ and followed the action closely – that these vicious organizations in Mexico are certainly attempting to create fear. They are attempting to instill terror within the population. If that were not true, you would not see the beheadings of the police officers whose heads were then hoisted on a pike in front of a police station with a placard on it that says, "this is how we treat all who come after us." Or, you wouldn't walk into a crowded discotheque with a black plastic garbage bag and bowl five heads onto the dance floor. Those things were done for a very specific purpose.

The instrumentality of these violent elements – the use of car bombs and so on – and the indiscriminate violence provide indisputable evidence that these terrorists are trying to drive fear into the heart of the Mexican populace. And they are trying to get the government of Mexico, and rival cartels, to back off, to give them the space and maneuver to continue to generate their huge illicit profits. Is that politically-motivated terrorism? Are they attempting to overthrow the government of Mexico? I don't think so. And this makes a difference in the authorities that we attach in designating these organizations as "terrorists."

Certainly what we read in the press surrounding the use of Predator drones in attacking terrorist cells in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen has come about because of the designation "terrorist" assigned to the groups and individuals we are targeting. They have been labeled as "national security threats." The disposition of those threats is probably appropriate; but it raises the question: "Would that constitute an appropriate way to deal with the problem in Mexico?" I'll reserve judgment on that. There's certainly a lot of room for discussion on that. But what I would say to you is that, in my mind, this is absolutely, unequivocally a national security threat. It needs to be dealt with as such; and it is significantly under-resourced.

This brings me to my third point. Oftentimes in panels of this sort, we spend a lot of time trying to define the problem. But we spend very little time talking about the solutions. So let me spend just a couple of minutes of the time that I have to talk about solutions.

1. Vincent Fox, the 87th President of Mexico, served from 1 Dec 2000 to 30 Nov 2006. Fox was the first President in 70 years to be elected outside the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI- Partido Revolucionario Institucional)

We have heard a lot about securing borders today, and about the vibrant connections between Mexico and the United States – all of which is absolutely true. But I think that one of the things we have learned in Colombia and elsewhere is that, in dealing with challenges like those we face in Mexico, you have to have a “defense in depth.” This is not (if I may use a mixed sports metaphor) only a “goal line stand” at the border, but it is likewise a “full court press.” We need to take this fight to our criminal adversaries wherever they may be – whether that is in the jungle labs of Colombia, or in Afghanistan, or against transportation venues through Mexico into the United States. The early days of my 32-year career, started off with a mentality that measured success by the kilo – “How much contraband did you seize?” Well, that didn’t accomplish very much, because the contraband itself is inert. In “Generation Two” the cry was, “Let’s go after Command and Control. Let’s go after the people who lead, organize, finance and control these [illicit] institutions.” Great stuff, very important, and I think we need to continue to do that.

But what I would suggest to you is that there is a version 3.0 (Apple is not the only one that needs to adapt, improvise and overcome). Our next step is to map out the business processes of these illicit enterprises. Because that is what they are – they are multi-billion dollar, transnational businesses. In order to address and debilitate these businesses, you have to understand them – the inputs, the outputs and the outcomes. And in the same way we would examine and ensure supply chain resilience, we have to find places in the cartels’ supply chain where we can use the resources that we have available to cause cascading failure.

I think that’s where we are going. There’s really a two-pronged attack that has come out of the Merida strategy. First, we want to assist the Mexican government in blunting the power and impunity of these criminal cartels, to get them to the point where they can be managed as a criminal justice problem. That will require U.S. government assistance and the willing participation of the government of Mexico; and, thank God, we have seen that sort of willingness. Second, we need to simultaneously assist in growing the infrastructure – the capabilities and the capacities – of our Mexican and Central American colleagues, so that we can diminish this threat from a matter of national security to one that can be managed in a traditional criminal justice program.

I’ll wrap up by building upon what my colleague, Mark, had said. In 1987 when I went to Peru, if someone had told me that the Colombian national police would be a model of excellence in this hemisphere, you would have

picked me up off of the floor belly-lauding; that's how bad it was. Today, no one would question that they stand as that model. They travel the world to train others in what they are doing. The so-called *despeje*,² the size of Switzerland that they were once afraid to enter, no longer exists. The FARC is a shadow of its former self. The Cali Cartel, the Norte del Valle Cartel, and the Medellin Cartel no longer exist. What you have in their ashes are fragmented criminal bands – the so-called *bandes criminales*. Has drug trafficking in Colombia gone away? No. Has criminality gone away? Absolutely not. Has the problem been blunted from one that required a kind of response that was really military in nature, to one that is approaching a law enforcement problem? I think the answer is, "Yes." And if there is room for optimism, it is that that success, with the cooperation of our governments – with drug prevention education, and treatment, and similar programs – can, and has made a difference. And together we will continue to make a difference, if we can stay the course in Mexico.

Thank you, very much.

2. At one time the Government of Colombia and the FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia) actually negotiated a demilitarized zone, the *despeje* that consisted of 5 southern municipalities and a total population of approximately 100,000 persons.

PANEL 2: MEXICO AS A CASE STUDY

Introduction

Bert B. Tussing

TO THIS POINT in our forum, the focus has been largely on the conceptual and the doctrinal – extant and required policies that could be used against a postulated threat manifested in the intersection of crime, insurgency and terrorism. The next panel will move on to examine the realization of that intersection, its emergence and its evolution, in the country of Mexico.

There is no longer room for conjecture over whether the threat described in the first panel exists in Mexico. Successful counter-narcotic operations in Colombia and other areas of South and Central America have forced the displacement of organized criminal activities into an easily accessible Mexico, where sanctuary has been guaranteed by the cartels. In the course of increased activities, phenomenal illicit profits have been realized, judged to range between 19 and 29 billion dollars in transnational criminal venues between the United States and Mexico each year. As the cartels battle among themselves for territories to control and grow the new sanctuaries, crime has melded into insurgency. Local governments have frequently been overpowered and displaced, and the criminal-insurgents have at least attempted to seize control over both jurisdictions and citizenry. President Calderon has battled valiantly against these efforts, committing well over 45,000 military personnel to the fight. But the costs to date for the Mexican people have been horrendous: 45,000 murders since December 2006, over 3600 kidnappings from 2009 through April of this year, and over 120,000 fleeing from their homes.

The criminal gang elements that constitute the foot-soldiers serving the tactical designs of the cartels are also beyond conjecture. Bred in prison and on the streets, they serve as traffickers and enforcers, and their activities are hardly limited to “south of the border.” General McCaffrey’s report indicated that the growth of gangs in the United States has been incredibly rapid: in 1980 approximately 2000 gangs made up of nearly an estimated 100,000 members were spread across 286 jurisdictions in the United States; by 2011, the gangs had grown to 30,000 in number, with over 1 million members.

Finally, the nexus between criminal and terrorist activities is growing clearer, and more ominous. The very term “narco-terrorist,” a part of the everyday

lexicon surrounding criminal activity in South America, Central America and Mexico, belies any attempts to hide from this reality. And, were there to be any doubt as to the intersection realized between organized crime and transnational terrorism, one needs look only to the recent plot to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador, designed around what planners proposed to be a partnership between state-sponsored terrorists and a Mexican Drug Cartel.

Addressing this clear and present danger this afternoon are Colonel Robert Killebrew, USA (Retired) of the Center for New American Security (CNAS), and Juan Zarate of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. In the interest of time, I will recommend their biographies for reading at your leisure; their bona fides, however, will become more than clear in their presentations.

NOT JUST ABOUT MEXICO; NOT JUST ABOUT DRUGS

Robert Killebrew, Colonel, USA (Retired)

LET ME JUST START OFF by telling you that I am not a Latin American expert. But I do know a little about warfare. The reason I got interested in this is that, in my hometown of Newport Virginia, the war against gangs began to look a lot to me like counterinsurgency. The road that leads me to sitting here in front of you today began about two years ago.

I have a standard line I use at talks like this, and I'll use it on you: This is not just about Mexico, and it's not just about drugs. I sympathize with Tony [Placido], but our terms for dealing with what we are currently facing are out of date. Eighteen months ago I used a term in a CNAS report: "criminal insurgency." And I was raked over the coals by various embassies here in town, by my fellow academics, and by anyone else who knew the book definition of "insurgency" vs. what was actually happening down there on the ground. Today I am happy to hear Bert using it. Today, the Mexican government uses the term "terrorist" to describe people throwing bombs in their cities. In another year they'll use the term "insurgency." Those terms are important because they dictate how we will respond to things. But the way that we are using them is out of date.

My remarks are not addressed to the other 60 year old "fuds"¹ in this room, but to all of you graduate students and the young people who are coming along behind us. You are going to have to deal with the transformation of war, and the integration of crime into insurgency and warfare. It is happening today; and the way we are organized to deal with it, and the way that we attempt to define it in our country and our institutions, is wrong.

I was patting myself on the back for this original thinking two or three months ago, thinking I was so smart, until I picked up Van Creveld's *Transformation of War*,² written in 1991. He had predicted the events now playing out in Mexico and other areas of the world were going to happen. But like the frog that sits in the cold water that gradually heats on the stove until it boils, we don't understand yet, and we have not reacted to the reality.

1. Killebrewism.

2. Van Creveld, Martin, 1991. *The Transformation of War: The Most Radical Reinterpretation of Armed Conflict Since Clausewitz*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

In the studies that I have done, the theater is South and Central America, Mexico and the United States. That's actually not the complete theater. Every one of the criminal organizations we are talking about has significant overseas connections, and is (in fact) an international criminal network. Likewise, Iran and Hezbollah, who are operating in conjunction with narcotic traffickers in Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, have demonstrated direct and attributable connections. So we are dealing with a spectrum of problems here that run all the way from your neighborhood gang-banger street dealers and retailers, all the way up to established criminal states, who use the trappings of legitimate states to avoid penalties for what they are doing, including establishing banks to maximize the international monetary system to their ends.

I will tell you that the analysts behind the green doors have been worried about this for years. The day that the story on the Saudi ambassador broke,³ I was being lectured to by another distinguished PhD who was declaring that the Quds force and the cartels would never cooperate. His position was, from the American way of looking at it, that there was no profit to be made that that would inspire these two groups to cooperate.

Focusing on Colombia, I have recently taken four trips there. The country is interesting for a number of reasons, not just because Plan Colombia worked. As a matter of fact, Colombia right now is the only country I can find, not only in this hemisphere but in the world, that is actually re-establishing the legitimacy of its government. This is not as automatic as we would like to think. The most compelling threat we may have to confront in the 21st century is the survival of representative government as we know it in the face of criminality. This is hardly a fanciful threat; some estimates hold that criminal organizations currently control a fifth of the world's GDP. And their share of that GDP is growing; and their growth is unchecked.

Colombia is important and has done a lot of good things. The country has, for example, the most important demobilization and reintegration program important program of its type in the world. It is hugely controversial in Colombia, and very expensive. But Mexico will probably not succeed as we examine their problem at the tactical level unless they establish a similar program. When you have close to a million people involved in one way or

3. On 11 October 2011, Manssor Arbabsiar, identified by U.S. agents as a member of the Quds force (a special unit in Iran's Revolutionary Guard) was arrested for plotting to assassinate Adel Al-Jubeir, the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States. Arbabsiar was captured in a sting operation that culminated when he approached an undercover DEA agent, seeking his help in coordinating with a Mexican drug cartel to assassinate the Ambassador.

another with the drug cartels and the drug business, you cannot put them all in jail. Something has to happen.

That's one of the intersection points between crime and insurgency as we understand it. In insurgency warfare you work to demobilize the insurgents; in criminal insurgency you have to demobilize the criminals. That is an enormously complicated legal problem, and is turning even Colombia into knots inside their government.

Who should handle this inside the U.S. government? I'll give you some ideas. In the conflict we are fighting along our borders (and not just the border with Mexico), there are probably three levels of response. One is the response within the region. Colombia is begging for more support from the United States so that they can increase their support to Mexico. Not many people know it, but the last time I looked there were about 2000 Mexican police training inside Colombia, under the tutelage of that excellent national police. Likewise, the last time I looked, Colombia had more advisers in Mexico than we do. There is an obvious affinity between Colombia and Mexico, and an accompanying reason for us to provide more funding to Colombia for their support to the Mexicans. That is the beginning of understanding how to use international ties to roll back the illegitimacy we see out there – not just with drugs, but all the other forms of crime in the region.

Second: within the United States it is my opinion (which is largely discounted by my contemporaries) that the Department of State – as bad as it is at planning – still has to take over this effort. This is primarily, first and foremost, a political problem. It is a political problem in Mexico; it is a political problem in the hemisphere. The only people we have that work outside of this country in diplomatic and political functions is the Department of State.

Now, to my third point: Underneath the Department of State happen to be some superb law enforcement agencies who are working out there – the DEA, the Border Patrol, and the FBI – all of whom have very strong ties with the Police establishment in the countries they are working. I'm probably blowing a national secret, but we still have ties to parts of the Venezuelan national police, who understand the nature of the problems we are addressing at this conference, and want to work with us. We need to empower one of our law enforcement agencies to take lead, internationally, in coordinating our responses – and my candidate would be the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). You may have noticed that it was a DEA informer that the Quds guy went to in trying to buy support for blowing up the Saudi ambassador. The DEA has

an extremely effective information and intelligence system that it works hard in sharing its information with regional, national and international police. They seem, to me, to be the force of choice for the kinds of coordination required in the region.

So if we can accomplish those three things – making better utilization of our international partners, put all of our efforts under the Department of State as the lead federal agency, and coordinate the law enforcement function of that interagency effort under the DEA – we will have the structure that we need to do what we need to do in Mexico, with Mexico. But with that structure you will need a strategy, and the current counterterrorism strategy (which is largely focused on al Qaeda) is not sufficient. A far better strategy for the problem at hand is the U.S. *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime*,⁴ because the U.S. strategy against transnational crime, although not significantly hooked to the resources it needs to fulfill its function, is nevertheless the framework we need to deal with crime and insurgency in our hemisphere.

4. Barack H. Obama, *Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime* (Washington, DC: The White House, July 2011)

LESSONS LEARNED AND RE-LEARNED: TRANSLATING THE GLOBAL EXPERIENCE TO THE MEXICAN CHALLENGE

Juan Zarate

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I want to thank Bert and Frank and Dan for inviting me here among an audience of professionals that have been working these issues for decades. And I want to commend Greg Gatjanis who is sitting in the back for the work that he has led on the *National Strategy for Combating Transnational Criminal Organizations*. This is an innovative and important piece of work, whose full importance I hope you will come to understand during the course of my presentation.

Let me take a quick step back because I do think we are in a very different period in our history in terms of the criminal-terrorism nexus; even different from what we have seen with the FARC taking on the disposition of an insurgent group in an international drug trafficking network. What we have now started to see is an ominous new environment wherein the elements of globalization, the ability of transnational groups to reach beyond their borders, and the role of carefully applied financing serve as vehicles to create marriages of convenience between criminality, insurgency and terrorism. All of these things have created a new environment in which actors – both criminal and terrorist – can operate in the same territory, within the same infrastructure. And I think that really is an environment where you see the Mexican problem emerging as national and international security concerns.

You have already seen it on the world stage: the FARC, with its global reach; and the Taliban with its reliance on the poppy trade. You have seen it in the growing reliance of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) upon the drug trafficking trade through West Africa. We are starting to observe Hezbollah's reliance on trafficking in the face of diminished support from Iran, particularly as it has played out through West Africa and into the Levant.

These are realities – if anyone were to have any question about them, they need only look to the ongoing trial in New York of Viktor Bout, the Russian arms merchant, who was taken down after two decades of relative impunity by the DEA. Eight months after they had taken on the mission, they executed a “sting operation” – the same kind of operation they used to get Monzer al-Kassar, the Palestinian arms merchant who had been holed up in Marbella for years. In

both cases, Bout and al-Kassar were lured by what was portrayed as potential millions in arms trade with the FARC; not only to provide them weapons and materiel, but to do so in a way that would prove politically relevant. In the case of al-Kassar, it was going after the Colombian Army; for Viktor Bout, it was actually going after American advisers.

These case studies have proven the ties between crime, insurgency and terrorism. In spite of the same, however, people are simply not focused on the connections. As another example, consider the case of Dawood Ibrahim, the Indian Crime Lord holed up in Pakistan. For some time he has built up a smuggling network in South Asia and the Middle East. He began his empire by stealing “Bollywood” film copyrights and selling them on the streets in South Asia. But eventually he became one of India’s most notorious crime bosses, not only engaged in all sorts of illegal and nefarious activities, but also serving as a supporter and financial facilitator for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and al Qaeda. When the dramatic attacks in Mumbai occurred in November of 2008, it was Dawood Ibrahim’s name that headed the Indian government’s requests for extradition by the Pakistanis.

So again, there is no question about the emergence of a globalized threat society wherein the nefarious actors of concern to this conference can, and are, willing to operate together. This willingness is not because of ideology, or religion; it is a matter of business and profit. These marriages of convenience are already upon us.

What is interesting to me then, in terms of Mexico, are three things. First, the very nature of the cartels is such that they have adapted the tactics of terror. We all understand that. Anyone who reads the newspapers understands, as Tony said, that they are trying to terrorize. Particularly considering their use of VBIEDs [Vehicle-borne Improvised Explosive Devices] over the last year, it is clear that they see terror tactics as a means of influence. Likewise, the nature of the violence itself is expanding in such a way that looks a lot like terrorism.

Secondly, the cartel is starting to look like an insurgency. This is to say that they are not only trying to retain influence over local government and territory, but have started to expand their links and operations into Central and South America. And this, of course, is enabled by their ability to finance what they are doing.

A third point of interest is the very straightforward tactic of the cartels surrounding the use of corruption to establish leverage for their influence. This

is the corrosive element that others in the forum have identified as a threat to democracy and the rule of law in Mexico; and an element that is still viewed as potentially spilling over into the United States. This is the element of corruption that allows these groups, as well as other transnational organized crime groups, to hold sway – to have influence beyond what they can accomplish by their violence and their money. In that element, we are starting to see a blending of Mexico's problems with international concerns.

In terms of what should be done, I might suggest we address the challenge along multiple venues with multiple means. I come from a background that was privileged in these endeavors. I started as a Federal prosecutor in the terrorism field before 9/11. Then when I was with the Treasury Department from 2001 to 2005, I was able to work on the terrorist financing and anti-money laundering campaigns. Then when I was at the White House from 2005 to 2009, I began working counterterrorism and transnational threats where I was able to work with Mark (Coomer) and Tony (Placido) and Greg (Gatjanis). That's how I got to know Frank and others. But it was from that expanded vantage point overseeing transnational threats where I think we were able to learn a lot of lessons. The one thing I would suggest here – to Tony's point and to the Colonel's (Killebrew's) about labels and the things we should learn from them – I think we have to focus on two lessons.

First, I think we have to learn from the things we have done well in the counterterrorism campaign – because we have done quite a few things well. We have created a “whole-of-nation” approach to dealing with al Qaeda and Sunni-led extremist movements. That has included all intelligence gathering and network analysis; capacity-building of our foreign counterparts; creating regional frameworks to actually deal with these issues; and dealing with the underlying grievances and systemic issues that involve rule of law, and the ability of courts to address these problems. In particular, given that these are networks which are in a fight for profits and access to markets, we have made great inroads in using financial tools and pressure to undercut their legitimacy and their leverage.

At the same time, I think we have to re-learn some lessons. We tend to jettison strategies over time. In one era you have a counterterrorism approach. In another you have a COIN [Counterinsurgency] strategy. In still another you have a counter-narcotic law enforcement approach. But I think we can learn from all of these, as pointed out by what we did well in the Colombian context. If you think back to how we used financial pressure and isolation against rogue

behavior in the international financial system best, it actually started in the anti-drug trafficking context, in our programs against the Norte del Valle Cartel, the Cali Cartel, and the Drug Kingpin Act.¹ And it was that framework that we built upon in constructing the terrorist financing campaign that ended up proving to be so successful against al Qaeda and other related groups.

And so I would say that we need to re-learn some of those lessons, and to apply them directly, immediately, and urgently to Mexico in a way that we didn't when I was in the White House. We should have, and we need to.

If I can just finish up; I think there are three inherent problems that we are going to face, and they relate to how you define success in the Mexican context and regionally. The first is the question of demand. We will continue to have demands for drugs, and if we don't deal with that in some significant way there will continue to be a fight for the plazas and the markets that reach into North America. And so the demand problem will remain a persistent variable, and we will have to impact that variable if we are going to impact the power of the cartels – be it in Mexico, Guatemala, or wherever the balloon may emerge next.

Second, even though there has been great progress made over the last few years, there remains a significant divide between Mexico and the United States government. Some of that is cultural and historical – especially between the militaries. Some of it has to do with other embedded issues, like immigration and the border, which politically makes it difficult in having “holistic” conversations with the Mexicans. And so that divide – and addressing that divide – becomes very important.

Finally I think the date November 30, 2012 should become emblazoned in our minds, at least those of us who worry about these issues. That's when President Calderon steps down. Then the question of Mexican political will to take risks and to continue on their current path will be called into question – on the part of the Mexican people and their leadership. At that time it will be all the more important for them to be creative in terms of dealing with corruption and rule of law issues.

1. The Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act (21 U.S.C. 1901-1908, 8 U.S.C. 1182). The Act became law on December 3, 1999. Its purpose is to deny significant foreign narcotics traffickers, their related businesses, and their operatives access to the U.S. financial system and to prohibit all trade and transactions between the traffickers and U.S. companies and individuals. The Kingpin Act authorizes the President to take these actions when he determines that a foreign person plays a significant role in international narcotics trafficking.

So with that, I am happy to rest my case, and happy to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you.



BIOGRAPHIES

Frank J. Cilluffo serves as Associate Vice President at The George Washington University, where he leads the school's homeland security efforts on policy, research, education, and training. He directs the multi-disciplinary Homeland Security Policy Institute, a nonpartisan "think and do tank" that builds bridges between theory and practice to advance homeland security through a multi and interdisciplinary approach. The Institute's recent policy and research agenda covers a wide range of national and homeland security matters, including counterterrorism, counter-radicalization and counter-narrative efforts, cyber threats and deterrence, transportation security, CBRN terrorism, intelligence, national resilience, emergency management, and the nexus of crime and terrorism. Cilluffo chairs HSPI's Ambassadors Roundtable Series on International Collaboration to Combat Terrorism and Insurgencies, moderates the Institute's Policy & Research Forums – which spotlight cutting-edge policy solutions and innovative research – and facilitates a variety of other programmatic events. Cilluffo joined GW in April 2003 from the White House where he served as Special Assistant to the President for Homeland Security. Shortly following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Cilluffo was appointed by the President to the newly created Office of Homeland Security, and served as a principal advisor to Governor Tom Ridge. Prior to his White House appointment, Cilluffo spent eight years in senior policy positions with the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), a Washington-based think tank. He has testified before the United States Congress on a number of occasions, has been a regular guest on major television and radio networks worldwide, and lectures extensively to governmental and academic audiences domestically and internationally.

Mark Coomer joined ITT Defense in April 2009 as Director of Business Development for U.S. Government customers in the Department of Homeland Security and Intelligence Community. Mark also leads ITT Cyber Strategic Planning efforts and coordinates the activities of the ITT Senior Advisory Council. His career encompasses over 37 years of government service in strategic planning and operations, programming and budgeting, project management, and intelligence as an Army Officer and in the Executive Office of the President. Prior to joining ITT, Mark served as a Senior Executive in the National Counter-Terrorism Center overseeing the implementation of two of the four pillars of our National Counter-Terrorism Strategy. While working in the Executive Office of the President, Mark coordinated international drug

control strategy and programs, wrote the classified International Drug Control Strategy, developed Plan Colombia policy and funding proposals, authored National Security Presidential Directive 25, International Drug Control, and developed intelligence initiatives for the Southwest Border. Mark has worked in the NSC interagency and Intelligence Community process for almost 14 years, chairing numerous NSC workgroups and representing the Office of National Drug Control Policy with the Intelligence Community. During his 20-year military career he held a variety of management, operations, and staff positions, led a task force of the 101st Airborne Division into Iraq during Operation Desert Storm, and coordinated all military operations in Latin America prior to his retirement in 1997. During his career, Mark traveled extensively in Latin America, the Middle East and South Asia, and lived in Latin America for almost 5 years.

Max G. Manwaring is a Professor of Military Strategy in the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) of the U.S. Army War College (USAWC). He has held the General Douglas MacArthur Chair of Research at the USAWC, and is a retired U.S. Army Colonel. He has served in various civilian and military positions, including the U.S. Southern Command, the Defense Intelligence Agency, Dickinson College, and Memphis University. Dr. Manwaring is the author and coauthor of several articles, chapters, and books dealing with Latin American security affairs, political-military affairs, and insurgency and counterinsurgency. His most recent book is *Insurgency, Terrorism, and Crime: Shadows from the Past and Portent for the Future*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. His most recent article is "Sovereignty under Siege: Gangs and Other Criminal Organizations in Central America and Mexico," in *Air & Space Power Journal* (in Spanish), forthcoming. His most recent SSI monograph is, *A Contemporary Challenge to State Sovereignty: Gangs and Other Illicit Transnational Criminal Organizations in Central America, El Salvador, Mexico, Jamaica, and Brazil*. Dr. Manwaring holds an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Illinois, and is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College.

Barry R. McCaffrey, General, USA (Retired) served in the United States Army for 32 years and retired as a four-star General. At retirement he was the most highly decorated serving General, having been awarded three Purple Heart medals for wounds received in his four combat tours – as well as twice awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest award for valor. He also twice was awarded the Silver Star for valor. For five years after leaving the military, Barry McCaffrey served as the nation's Cabinet Officer in charge of U.S. Drug Policy. He was confirmed for this position by unanimous

vote by the U.S. Senate. For this period of public service, General McCaffrey received many honors, including the Department of Health and Human Service Lifetime Achievement Award for Extraordinary Achievements in the Field of Substance Abuse Prevention (2004), the United States Coast Guard Distinguished Public Service Award, the Norman E. Zinberg Award of the Harvard Medical School, the Federal Law Enforcement Foundation's National Service Award, and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America Lifetime Achievement Award. After leaving government service General McCaffrey served as the Bradley Distinguished Professor of International Security Studies from January 2001 to May 2005, and then as an Adjunct Professor of International Security Studies from May 2005 to December 2010, at the United States Military Academy, West Point, NY.

Anthony Placido led the Drug Enforcement Administration's intelligence program, including the global collection enterprise. His responsibilities included service as Senior Officer for the United States Intelligence Community; executive leadership for the headquarters based Intelligence Division, the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Fusion Center and the El Paso Intelligence Center; information sharing and exchange protocols; managing a budget of approximately \$100 million and developing policy for a staff of approximately 1,300, including more than 900 Intelligence Analysts assigned around the world. Mr. Placido began his law enforcement career in 1979 with the U.S. Customs Service. The following year he joined DEA and received an appointment as a Special Agent in 1982. Mr. Placido served in multiple domestic and foreign posts, has extensive experience in foreign affairs and in developing policy and leading counter-drug programs. His management assignments include: Team Leader for the Tactical Intelligence Unit in Peru; Supervisor for an enforcement group in Florida; Senior Inspector with the Office of Professional Responsibility (internal affairs); and Executive Assistant to DEA's Deputy Administrator.

In 1998, Mr. Placido was promoted into the Senior Executive Service and was assigned as the Country Attaché for Bolivia where he oversaw an unprecedented reduction in the availability of cocaine. From 2000-2002, Mr. Placido was assigned as the Regional Director for the Mexico-Central America Division and was responsible for leading operations in eight countries throughout the region. During his tenure, major drug trafficking organizations such as the Arellano-Felix and Carillo-Fuentes organizations and the Sonora and Gulf Cartels were disrupted and/or dismantled. In 2002, Mr. Placido was appointed as the Special Agent in Charge of DEA's New York Field Division.

In this capacity, he led the effort to establish the first Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force in the nation, a multi-agency endeavor featuring innovative financing, co-mingled interagency staffing, shared management and a common reporting system.

In 2005, Deputy Attorney General James Comey appointed Mr. Placido as the founding Director of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Fusion Center, which utilizes an interagency workforce, a fused multi-agency database, sophisticated computer systems and advanced analytics to support investigations against transnational criminal organizations. Contemporaneously, DEA Administrator Karen Tandy appointed Mr. Placido to serve as Assistant Administrator and Chief of Intelligence. In this capacity, he led successful efforts to have DEA readmitted as a member of the U.S. Intelligence Community and to take a staff position at the National Security Council. He served as co-chair of the Anti-Drug Intelligence Community Team, which is the de facto issue manager for the counter-drug portfolio within the U.S. Intelligence Community. During his tenure, he also reinvigorated the El Paso Intelligence Center and significantly expanded information sharing programs.

Robert Killebrew, Colonel, USA (Retired) writes and consults on national defense issues as a Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. Prior to his retirement from active duty he served for thirty years in a variety of Special Forces, infantry and staff duties. His assignments included duty in Vietnam with MACVSOG, the Vietnamese Airborne Division, command in mechanized, air assault and airborne units, and staff positions in the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, as director of plans, XVIII Airborne Corps, special assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Army, command of a deployed joint task force and as an instructor in strategy and policy at the Army War College. Since retirement, Bob has served as a consultant to a variety of Defense Department and defense-related organizations, including the Department of Defense, U.S. Army and Air Force, the Defense Research Projects Agency, U.S. Joint Forces Command, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, the Project for a New American Century, Toffler Associates and as a consultant for a number of defense industries and public television. In 1999 he was appointed to the staff of the Hart-Rudman Commission on American defense needs for the 21st century. In addition to consulting on strategic and operational matters, Bob has also directed or written a number of defense-related studies, including the State/DoD Study *The Country Team in American Strategy*, and *The Left-Hand Side of the Spectrum*, for the Center for a New American Security. Most recent writings include *The Crossover of Urban Gang Warfare and Terrorism* (National

Strategy Forum, Fall 2008), and *Terror at the Border* for Armed Forces Journal, December, 2008. With Jennifer Bernal he authored the CNAS study, *Crime Wars; Gangs, Cartels and U.S. National Security*, published in 2010. He is currently working with Matthew Irvine on U.S. – Colombian security policy.

Bert B. Tussing graduated with honors from The Citadel in 1975 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. During a 24 year career in the Marines, Professor Tussing served operationally with the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing; the 2nd Marine Division; Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One; Marine Helicopter Squadron One (where he was designated a Presidential Command Pilot); and with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable). Over the course of his career he participated in multiple humanitarian relief exercises in the Caribbean; Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada; operations as a part of the Multinational Force in Beirut; Operations Provide Promise and Deny Flight in Bosnia; and the final withdrawal of U.S. forces from Somalia. Following his operational assignments, Tussing was assigned to the Pentagon where he served as Marine Corps Analyst to the Secretary of the Navy in the Office of Program Appraisal. While there, he participated in the Secretary of the Navy's focus group for the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces, and served as a consultant on the Defense Science Board on "Tactics and Techniques for the 21st Century." Professor Tussing was subsequently selected for a Brookings Legislative Fellowship, through which he served on the staff of the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee's Personnel Subcommittee. Following the fellowship, he assumed duties as Deputy Legislative Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Professor Tussing joined the United States Army War College's Center for Strategic Leadership in October of 1999. His focus areas include Homeland Defense, Homeland Security, Terrorism, and Civil-Military Relations. Since the spring of 2001 he has led and served in multiple forums and studies focused on homeland defense, homeland security, and military support of civil authorities. He has served on three Defense Science Boards and has hosted, organized and facilitated numerous symposiums and workshops dedicated to domestic security in support of the Department of Homeland Security, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Americas' Security Affairs, the United States Northern Command, and the National Guard Bureau. In 2006 he initiated the formation of the Consortium for Homeland Defense and Security in America, partnering the Army War College with George Washington University's Homeland Security Policy

Institute, the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and the Heritage Foundation, and providing for an annual forum dedicated to addressing the challenges and complexities of domestic defense in the modern era. Professor Tussing is a senior fellow of George Washington University's Homeland Security Policy Institute; a member of the Board of Experts for UC-Irvine's Center for Unconventional Security Affairs; on the Homeland Defense and Security Advisory Board of Penn State University; a steering committee member of the Homeland Security/Defense Education Consortium Association; and a senior fellow of Long Island University's Homeland Security Management Institute. In December 2009 he completed an appointment to the Department of Homeland Security's *Homeland Security Advisory Council*, wherein he served in advising the development and execution of the Department's Congressionally-mandated *Quadrennial Homeland Security Review*.

Juan C. Zarate is a Senior Adviser to the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a national security consultant and analyst for CBS News. Mr. Zarate sits on the Board of Advisors of Regulatory Data Corps and the National Counterterrorism Center and consults for a range of companies and organizations on national, homeland, and financial-related security, technologies, and investments. Mr. Zarate served as the Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy National Security Advisor for Combating Terrorism from 2005 to 2009. In this role, Mr. Zarate was responsible for developing and overseeing the effective implementation of the U.S. government's counterterrorism strategy. He was also responsible for overseeing all policies related to transnational security threats, including counternarcotics, maritime security, hostages, international organized crime, money laundering, and critical energy infrastructure protection. Prior to joining the NSC, Mr. Zarate served as the first Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorist Financing and Financial Crimes where he led Treasury's domestic and international efforts to attack terrorist financing, build comprehensive anti-money laundering systems, and expand the use of Treasury powers to advance national security interests. Mr. Zarate also led the U.S. government's global efforts to hunt Saddam Hussein's assets, resulting in the return of over \$3 billion of Iraqi assets from the U.S. and around the world. Mr. Zarate served at the Treasury Department from 2001 to 2005, where he received the Treasury Medal. Prior to working at the Department of the Treasury, Mr. Zarate served as a prosecutor in the Department of Justice's Terrorism and Violent Crime Section, where he worked on terrorism cases, including the USS Cole investigation. Mr. Zarate previously worked as a federal law clerk for Chief Judge Judith Keep in the Southern District of California.



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